12 September 2026

Recorded by Harry Warren Mason III

Research to date confirms that the Mason line of Harry Warren Mason II (1932-2022) originated in England and descends from Thomas Mason, yeoman, of Monkton, on the Isle of Thanet in eastern Kent. A three generation pedigree of Thomas Mason and his descendants is recorded in the 1619 Kent Visitation. The arms of Thomas Mason of Monkton in the 1619 Kent Visitation match those assumed by Mason descendants in America, and various records in both England and America strongly support the connection of this English Mason line to the Colonial American Mason ancestors of Harry Warren Mason II (1932-2022).

The appellations which evolved into the English Mason surname are generally accepted to be Norman, arriving with William the Conqueror around 1066. The first location of these early Mason ancestors in England is not proven, but there is evidence of these stonemasons in Yorkshire, Kent, and London beginning at the time of the Conquest.

Sources examined are family histories, pedigrees, records of births, baptisms, marriages, burials, wills, coats of arms, grants of arms, catalogs and dictionaries of arms, Heralds' Visitation pedigrees, the Domesday Book, the Red and Black Books of the Exchequer, the Ragman Rolls, the Descriptive Catalogue of the Original Charters, Royal Grants and Donations of the Battle Abbey, the Honour Roll of the Battle Abbey, Records of the Templars in England in the Twelfth Century, the Pipe Rolls, the Curia Regis Rolls, the Falaise Roll, the Ramsey Chronicle, The Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Compounding, The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe, the History of Parliament online, city and church histories, land records, DNA matches, and others.

The Mason line of Harry Warren Mason II (1932-2022) is descended from one of the twelve grandsons of Thomas Mason of Monkton, Robert Mason of Roxbury, Massachusetts, who emigrated to America with his wife and three sons in 1632 and first settled in Roxbury, Massachusetts. The line is descended from the second of the three sons of Robert of Roxbury, Massachusetts, Robert II, through his son John and grandsons Seth, Moses, Henry, Henry II, George, Harry, George, and Harry Warren Mason II (1932-2022). A Mason family tree, with sources, named "Masons Before And After Robert of Roxbury, MA" can be viewed on Ancestry.com (Member Name - Harry Mason – joined 20Jan2023 – in Virginia).

One link to the 1619 Kent Visitation:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.31175013653368&seq=207

Records indicate that the Mason line of Harry Warren Mason II (1932-2022) descends from Thomas Mason of Monkton (b. @1552), through his first son and heir William Mason of Great Mongeham, Kent, Gray's Inn, and Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, Custos Brevium of the King's Bench, J.p. Suff. 1618-*d* (b. 1572) recorded in the 1619 Kent Visitation Mason pedigree.

Thomas Mason of Monkton married Thomasine Dewfeld/Dewfield of Chalfont St. Giles in Eastry, Kent on 10 Jan 1572. Their first son William Mason, later of Gray's Inn and Bury St. Edmunds, was baptized on 10 Aug 1572, according to the same source:

Thomas Masson and Tomysin Dovill married at Eastry, Kent 10 Jan 1572:

https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=R_856833674

Image at FamilySearch Library:

https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NN48-5QF?lang=en

William Mason, son of Thomas Mason, was born 10 Aug 1572 in Eastry, Kent:

https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/9841/records/28716634?tid=&pid=&queryId=eddb72b2-1c57-4618-8f4d-81b7087838ec&_phsrc=NxX4114&_phstart=successSource

https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:J7LG-P5K?lang=en

Image at FamilySearch Library:

https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JSY6-Y84?lang=en

The marriage of Thomas Mason of Monkton and Thomasine Dewfeld/Dewfield of Chalfont St. Giles, their first son William, later of Gray's Inn and Bury St. Edmunds, and his younger brother James, of Frindsbury, Kent are also recorded in the 1619 Kent Visitation.

William Mason of Gray's Inn and Bury St. Edmunds married Anne Cannon of Swaffham, Norfolk, at Ixworth Bury St. Edmunds according to an Ixworth church register on 6 Aug 1601. This marriage is also recorded in the 1619 Kent Visitation:

https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/62751/records/3868606?tid=&pid=&queryId=6092e959-7944-4c11-88f9-

221db6c28a17&_phsrc=lmu868&_phstart=successSource

https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBPRS%2FM%2F753703057%2F2&tab=this

The first three of twelve sons of William Mason and Anne Cannon, whose baptisms are recorded in the same Ixworth church register that recorded their marriage, were heir Sir William Mason (b. 1602, knighted 1645), Henry Mason (b. 1603), and Robert Mason of Roxbury, Massachusetts (b. 1604). The other sons of William Mason and Anne Cannon were baptized at Bury St. Edmunds St. James, save son Thomas, possibly born in London near Gray's Inn or in East Raynham near his mother Anne Cannon's childhood home of Swaffam, Norfolk.

Eleven of the twelve sons of William Mason and Anne Cannon are recorded in the 1619 Kent Visitation, but the birth of son George Mason was too late to be recorded in the 1619 Kent Visitation, which spanned the years 1619 to 1621. However the will of his brother Benjamin Mason of Pixley, Hereford, Esq. names other brothers who were included in the 1619 Visitation, along with this brother George:

https://willsdb.gukutils.org.uk/HEF/WillsM.html

Sir William Mason bapt. 13Dec1602 in Ixworth, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk:

https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/9841/records/9235501?tid=&pid=&queryId=3113aed5-3c21-4548-92a0-65faa3753c46&_phsrc=NxX4325&_phstart=successSource

https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=R_22086040915&tab=this

Henry Mason bapt. 4Dec1603 in Ixworth, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk:

https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/9841/records/125243399?tid=&pid=&queryId=1650eb6b-c1d8-43c7-934d-06d82f90a023&_phsrc=NxX4619&_phstart=successSource

https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/62751/records/3866609?tid=&pid=&queryId=ecca081b-d87c-402a-93e2-2b5057b27c4d&_phsrc=Non4658&_phstart=successSource

Robert Mason of Roxbury bapt. 24Mar1604 in Ixworth, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk:

https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/9841/records/66380055?tid=&pid=&queryId=65d4f507-1645-4319-a9b0-4b2087140e47&_phsrc=NxX4082&_phstart=successSource

https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=R_22086037534&tab=this

John Mason bapt. 11Feb1604/5 at Bury St. Edmunds St. James, Suffolk:

https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/viewer/255314/?offset=0#page=65&viewer=picture&o=info&n=0&q=

Thomas Mason son of William possibly bapt. 9June1611 in London, near Gray's Inn:

https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=R_939107110&tab=this

Thomas Mason son of William Mason possibly bapt. 5Mar1608 in East Raynham, Norfolk:

https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=PRS%2FNORFOLK%2FAT%2FBAP%2FEAST-RAYNHAM%2F00032&tab=this

Simon Mason buried 26Oct1612 at Bury St. Edmunds St. James, Suffolk:

https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FNBI%2F13177860&tab=this

James Mason bapt. 16Feb1613/14 at Bury St. Edmunds St. James, Suffolk:

https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-L9C5-3Z79?i=41&lang=en

https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/viewer/255314/?offset=0#page=80&viewer=picture&o=search&n=0&q=mason

Richard Mason bapt.10Oct1615 at Bury St. Edmunds St. James, Suffolk:

https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/viewer/255314/?offset=0#page=82&viewer=picture&o=info&n=0&q=

Charles Mason, Royalist Divine, born @Christmas 1616 in Bury St. Edmunds, exact date and place undetermined:

https://www.ancestry.co.uk/imageviewer/collections/1981/images/31205_Vol12-01319?queryId=bd4132ce-c65a-4bd2-b057-

c762750cd94f&usePUB=true&_phsrc=Non5221&_phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true&pId=35831

Joseph Masson bapt. 24Nov1620 at Bury St. Edmunds St. James, Suffolk:

https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-99C5-3ZFH?i=47&lang=en

https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/viewer/255314/?offset=0#page=92&viewer=picture&o=search&n=0&q=mason

Benjamin Masson bapt. 24Apr1622 at Bury St. Edmunds St. James, Suffolk:

https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=R_22084614375&tab=this

https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/viewer/255314/?offset=0#page=94&viewer=picture&o=search&n=0&q=masson

George Masson bapt. 4Sep1623 at Bury St. Edmunds St. James, Suffolk:

https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-L9C5-3ZQV?i=49&lang=en

https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/viewer/255314/?offset=0#page=97&viewer=picture&o=search&n=0&q=masson

The histories of the twelve sons of William Mason of Gray's Inn and Bury St. Edmunds, the grandsons of Thomas Mason of Monkton, are interesting, if tragic. A hint of this can be found in a short biography of William Mason of Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, Custos Brevium of the King's Bench, J.p. Suff. at the History of Parliament website at the following link:

http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/mason-william-1572-1627

Son of the late Thomas Mason of Monkton, William Mason of Great Mongeham, Kent, was admitted to Gray's Inn in 1595. According to Wikipedia, Gray's Inn is one of London's four prestigious Inns of Court, serving as a professional society and training center for barristers and judges in England and Wales. Established before 1388, it features a historic estate in central London with private gardens, a law library, and dining facilities.

Three of William Mason's twelve sons were also later admitted. They were heir Sir William Mason, son Henry, and son John. Grandson William Mason, by heir Sir William Mason, was also admitted. See "Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica" v.7:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000023970496&seq=538&q1=mafon

Also see "The Register of Admissions to Gray's Inn, 1521-1889":

https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/viewer/689790/?offset=147&return=1&viewer=picture&medianame=428190_000491&q=%22Great%20Waldingfield%22#page=541&viewer=picture&o=search&n=0&q=Mason

The sons of William Mason of Gray's Inn were Loyalists and Parliamentarians on opposing sides in the English Civil War, which culminated with the victory of the Parliamentarians and the eventual execution of King Charles I in 1649.

The eldest son and heir of William Mason of Gray's Inn, Sir William Mason, a Loyalist, was knighted in 1645 for rushing to the King's aid as hostilities began, forming a protective guard with allies from Gray's Inn in London when Parliament withdrew the King's Guard:

http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/mason-william-1572-1627

One of Sir William's younger brothers, Benjamin, and other brothers, fought with the Parliamentarians (see prior link). Benjamin was later accused of being a Loyalist, and many court documents track these accusations. In these records are supportive depositions of his comrades in arms defending his Parliamentarian loyalties and remarking on the fact that he did have brothers on the side of the Loyalists. The Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Compounding, etc., 1643-1660 contains several records concerning these accusations as well as of Benjamin Mason's acquittal:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=msu.31293027026552&seq=299&q1=Mason
Unfortunately for Loyalist Sir William Mason, eldest brother of emigrant Robert Mason of Roxbury, MA, the War was won by the Parliamentarians, who seized the Manors and property of Loyalists under the Royalist Confiscation Acts. His property was seized and he was reduced in his final years to appealing for a pension from the reestablished Monarchy under

King Charles II, the son of King Charles I executed by the Parliamentarians and Oliver Cromwell after the War. See the following:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015066345680&seq=209&q1=Mason

https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/viewer/605372/?offset=1&return=1#page=549&viewer=picture&o=info&n=0&q=

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d005874813&seq=698

Robert Mason of Roxbury, Massachusetts, the third of the twelve brothers, emigrated to America in 1632, well before the English Civil War. Their father William the elder had died by 1628 at Barningham, Suffolk and all of his land in Barningham was by this time either sold or willed to heir Sir William Mason. In his 1626 will, William the elder left his younger sons each a large sum of money. Robert Mason, married in 1624 and having in-laws led by Minister Thomas Weld/Welde, emigrated to America in 1632 with a group from Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, likely seeking religious liberty and an escape from the building turmoil.

Robert Mason of Roxbury, MA and Mary Wise married 15 Apr 1624 at All Saints Sudbury, Suffolk, England and their three sons' baptisms are recorded in the same church register. The sons were John (b. 1625), Robert II (b. 1627), and Thomas (b. 1629):

Robert Mason and Mary Wise 1624 marriage at All Saints Sudbury, Suffolk:

https://www.ancestry.com/sharing/1777491?mark=ff813f4a2d3b7782bde12ad00c9bfda6964150f7482cd866146fa055a80ecd1f

Robert Mason and Mary Wise Sudbury Suffolk marriage search result:

https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBPRS%2FM%2F753728188%2F1

John Mason son of Robert Mason bapt. 10Jul1625 All Saints Sudbury, Suffolk:

https://www.ancestry.co.uk/imageviewer/collections/62751/images/62751_372055000018_2718-00051?usePUB=true&_phsrc=Non4632&_phstart=successSource&pId=735590

Robert Mason son of Robert Mason bapt. 10Feb1627 All Saints Sudbury, Suffolk

https://www.ancestry.co.uk/imageviewer/collections/62751/images/62751_372055000018_2718-00053?usePUB=true&_phsrc=Non4632&_phstart=successSource&pId=735590

Thomas Mason son of Robert Mason bapt. 21Mar1629 All Saints Sudbury, Suffolk:

https://www.ancestry.co.uk/imageviewer/collections/62751/images/62751_372055000018_2718-00055?usePUB=true&_phsrc=Non4632&_phstart=successSource&pId=735590

Robert Mason of Roxbury, Massachusetts emigrated to America in 1632 with his wife, three sons, and other families, including his wife's sister and her in-laws, aboard the William and Francis, arriving in Boston on 5 June 1632.

Two separate ship records with incomplete passenger manifests include both that Mr. Welde was a passenger and that they were bound for Roxbury. Joseph Welde, brother of Minister Thomas Welde, was the husband of Elizabeth Wise Welde, older sister of Mary Wise Mason, the wife of Robert Mason of Roxbury.

The American Genealogist v.55, no. 3 July, 1979, pp. 145-150 contains two articles by Douglas Richardson entitled “New England Weld Family” and “Widow Wise of Roxbury, Mass., and Her Sons-in-law”, which confirm the relationships of Robert Mason of Roxbury, his wife Mary Wise, her sister Elizabeth Wise Weld to the Weld family.

William and Francis arrived 5 June 1632 - 60 passengers, including families and Mr. Welde:

https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QHV-B3PV-4G7R?cat=127567&i=211&lang=en

William and Francis arrived as recorded in the source above - and records that passengers were bound for Roxbury:

https://www.packrat-pro.com/ships/williamfrancis2.htm

The 1632 arrival of Thomas Welde aboard the William and Francis is recorded in Winthrop’s “History of New England”:

https://archive.org/details/journalhistoryof0001wint/page/80/mode/2up?q=welde

Also, in “Under the Black Horse Flag: Annals of the Weld Family and Some of its Branches”
by Anderson, Isabel, 1876-1948, it is recorded that Rev. Thomas Weld and his brother Joseph Weld arrived on the same ship:

https://archive.org/details/underblackhorsef00ande_0/page/8/mode/2up?q=%22Joseph+Weld%22

Also see “New England, The Great Migration and The Great Migration Begins, 1620-1635**”,** Robert Charles Anderson:

https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2496/images/42521_b158320-00649?usePUB=true&_phsrc=Non5616
The Mason line of Harry Warren Mason II (1932-2022) is descended from the middle son of Robert of Roxbury, Robert II, through his son John and grandsons Seth, Moses, Henry, Henry II, George, Harry, George, and Harry Warren Mason II (1932-2022). A Mason family tree, with sources, named “Masons Before And After Robert of Roxbury, MA” can be viewed on Ancestry.com (Member Name - Harry Mason – joined 20Jan2023 – in Virginia).

After his wife’s death in 1637, Robert Mason of Roxbury relocated with all three of his sons, helping to establish a settlement at Dedham, Massachusetts. Later, his two youngest sons, Robert II and Thomas, left Dedham and helped to establish a settlement at Medfield.

Robert Mason of Roxbury died on 5 October 1667 in Dedham, Massachusetts:

https://archive.org/details/earlyrecordsofto01dedh/page/10/mode/1up?q=mason

https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2495/records/5909840

After his death at Dedham, Massachusetts in 1667, an Administrative Bond was executed by the three sons of Robert Mason. The document includes an inventory of his estate as well as the signatures and seals of all three:

Page 1:

https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/collection/1030/tree/113365721/person/412687408714/media/fc79b3f4-f441-48c9-a08f-b9380e263a0d?queryId=43bc7e30-6fd9-497a-8815-

5769fe896005&searchContextTreeId=&searchContextPersonId=&_phsrc=NxX4582&_phstart=successSource

Page 2:

https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/collection/1030/tree/113365721/person/412687408714/media/10c420a8-26c1-4720-a39f-52b64b9ca69e?queryId=20fd7c59-a519-4abc-9760-5b69f48de621&searchContextTreeId=&searchContextPersonId=&_phsrc=NxX4579&_phstart=successSource

Page 3:

https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/collection/1030/tree/113365721/person/412687408714/media/2e5c456e-caff-4da0-b2fe-900bed528000?queryId=08f22565-787b-4088-ab1f-1f9565a28f19&searchContextTreeId=&searchContextPersonId=&_phsrc=NxX4580&_phstart=successSource

The design of the seal of John Mason on this document may include his arms and appear to include a chevron between at least two unidentifiable charges.
The descendants of the youngest son of Robert Mason of Roxbury, Thomas Mason of Medfield, killed by indians during King Philip's War in 1676 along with two of his sons, and in the line of noted composer Dr. Lowell Mason, claim the following arms:

Per pale argent and sable a chevron between three mason's squares all counterchanged
Crest: A stag's head erased sable attired and ducally gorged or

See p. 7 of “A Record of the Descendants of Robert Mason, of Roxbury, Mass.:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=wu.89061973012&seq=13&q1=chevron

Also see Bolton’s American Armory:

https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/viewer/435060/?offset=0#page=226&viewer=picture&o=search&n=0&q=Mason

The arms of Thomas Mason of Monkton, Isle of Thanet, Kent in the 1619 Kent Visitation are nearly identical to those claimed by the descendants of Thomas Mason of Medfield, the youngest son of Robert Mason of Roxbury

and younger brother of Robert Mason II, direct ancestor of Harry Warren Mason II (1932-2022). The family crest is identical. The arms are:

Per pale argent and sable a chevron between three billets all counterchanged
Crest: A stag's head erased sable attired and ducally gorged or
Motto: Demeure Par La Verite’

The Norfolk, England Record Office holds one of two copies of a circa 1510 manuscript called Wriothesley's Book of Chevrons, which contains a third, nearly identical version of these Mason arms (see title page, this document). The arms are:

Per pale argent and sable a chevron embattled between three billets all counterchanged
There is no family crest depicted.

Research and consultation with the College of Arms, London suggests that these Mason arms precede the College of Arms and official control of the use and grant of arms. They could be centuries older, perhaps approaching the time of the Norman invasion by William the Conqueror in 1066.

The Arms of Sir William Mason are found in “Supplement a' l' Armorial General”, Rietstap, J B (Johannes Baptist), 1828-1891:

Per pale or and sable three stag’s heads erased counterchanged
Crest: A stag’s head erased sable attired and ducally gorged or

https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/viewer/635737/?offset=0#page=39&viewer=picture&o=search&n=0&q=mason
The arms of Lacy, of Beverley in the 1584 Yorkshire Visitation are:

Sable, a chevron between three stag’s heads cabossed argent
Crest: A stag’s head cabossed per pale or and argent attires counterchanged:

https://archive.org/details/McGillLibrary-hssl_visitation-yorkshire_CS437Y4A2-19990/page/539/mode/1up

The similarity of these Lacy arms to those of Sir William Mason are striking, given that a reversal of tinctures and counterchanging between the shield and crest results in:

Per pale argent and sable a chevron between three stag’s heads cabossed all counterchanged
Crest: A stag’s head cabossed sable attired or

These fictitious arms then differ from those of Thomas Mason of Monkton only by the replacement of the billets with stag's heads cabossed and in the crest by changing the stag's head to cabossed.

European arms from as early as the 13th century have been researched, focusing on Normandy, as a House of Names Mason family history commissioned by Harry Warren Mason II (1932-2022) records that the surname Mason arrived with Conqueror William, Duke of Normandy, in the time of the 1066 invasion at Hastings on the coast of south central England and that one or more Masons were granted land on the Isle of Thanet for service at the Battle of Hastings.

"The Descriptive Catalogue of the Original Charters, Royal Grants, and Donations of the Battle Abbey" records that land was held by Robert Cementarius (Mason) in the area of Battle. Robert Cementarius is frequently named as a testator to various feofments; in some, he is designated as Robert de Duna; in others, as Robert de la Dune; and in some few, as " Robert le Mazun:

https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/viewer/472985/?offset=0#page=27&viewer=picture&o=search&n=0&q=cementarius

In "The Norman People and Their Existing Descendants in the British Dominions and the United States of America", there is record in 1165 of Richard, William, Robert, and Henry de Duna holding several knights' fees in Devon, Cornwall, Derby, and Essex:

https://archive.org/details/normanpeopleand01unkngoog/page/228/mode/2up?q=dune

"The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe. v.2" records that a J. Monum accompanied the Conqueror at Hastings:

https://archive.org/details/actsmonumentsofj02foxe_0/page/137/mode/1up

Because the usual French preposition "de", identifying family place of origin, does not appear in this name as it does in those of most, it is a possible that the word "Monum" here identifies J. Monum as a monument mason, a skilled craftsman in artistic marble and other decorative stonework. It is possible that this J. Monum of Normandy is the Mason ancestor who was said to accompany William the Conqueror.

See p.6 of: "A History of the College of Arms, and the Lives of All the Kings, Heralds, and Pursuivants from the Reign of Richard III, Founder of the College, Until the Present Time" for a discussion of the identification of

those accompanying the Conqueror, and of the introduction of surnames during this period:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433081781555&seq=30&q1=Wriothesley

A Norman shield was identified which is similar to that in the Mason arms above, being per pale argent and sable a chevron counterchanged, but without any additional charges such as billets or mason's squares.

These arms of/from Lillebon/Lillebonne, France or Lilborne/Lillebourne, Northamptonshire/Wiltshire are recorded in “Three Rolls of Arms of the Latter Part of the Thirteenth Century”, in entries for “Dauid Lilleborne” and “W(alter). de Lillebon”:

https://archive.org/details/threerollsofarms00walfrich/page/60/mode/2up?q=Lillebon

A family in or named Lillebon in Lillebon/Lillebonne, Normandy, France with these arms may have been the ancestors of the first Mason line in England.

Also see “Charles's Roll of Arms: of the Reigns of Henry III & Edward I” (1216 – 1307) – arms of David Lilleborne:

https://archive.org/details/charlesrollofarm0000unse/page/n25/mode/2up?q=lilleborne

The arms in the Charles Roll are also recorded in “Some Feudal Coats of Arms and Others, Illustrated with 2,000 Zinco Etchings from the Bayear Tapestry”**:**

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.c2740835&seq=175&q1=%22Per+pale+argent%22

A French armorial contains the same arms - Per pale argent and sable a chevron counterchanged, circa 1502. See “La Réception Faite à la Reine de Hongrie Dans Ses États, en 1502; par Bretagne”:

https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9009483r/f20.item.r=francais%2090%20reception.zoom

In “The Norman People and Their Existing Descendants in the British Dominions and the United States of America”, there is a record of both a William le Mazon in Normandy and a Hugh le Mazun in England:

https://archive.org/details/normanpeopleand00unkngoog/page/334/mode/2up

The French article “le” is an indicator of profession, in these cases that of stonemason.

A good source for European arms:

https://heraldica.hypotheses.org/1770

The House of Names Mason family history commissioned by Harry Warren Mason II (1932-2022) records that land on the Isle of Thanet, Kent was granted to a Mason ancestor by William the Conqueror for service during the Norman invasion of 1066. Examination of the Roll of the Battle Abbey, the Domesday Book, and the Bayeux Tapestry revealed no record of the surname or occupation of Mason. This likely indicates that, if a Mason ancestor benefitted from the division of the conquered territories, he was not of higher rank.

Battle Abbey Roll Index:

https://archive.org/details/battleabbeyrollw03battuoft/page/486/mode/2up?q=mason

However, as stated above, “The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe. v.2” records that a J. Monum accompanied the Conqueror at Hastings:

https://archive.org/details/actsmonumentsofj02foxe_0/page/137/mode/1up

“The Descriptive Catalogue of the Original Charters, Royal Grants, and Donations of the Battle Abbey” records that land was held by Robert Cementarius (Mason) in the area of Battle:

https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/viewer/472985/?offset=0#page=27&viewer=picture&o=search&n=0&q=cementarius

According to “A History of Kent” (Frank W. Jessup, 1987) there is mention in the Domesday Book that three knights, tenants of St. Augustine Abbey, held land in Minster on the Isle of Thanet:

https://archive.org/details/historyofkent0000jess_t7h4/page/46/mode/2up?q=monkton
Domesday Book:

https://opendomesday.org/place/TR3164/minster/

Perhaps one of these knights was the Mason in the family history commissioned by Harry Warren Mason II (1932-2022) who was granted land for service during the Norman Conquest.

In “The Red Book of the Exchequer”, it is recorded that, in 1166, Johannes of Acrise, Kent held one knights fee of William de Ros of the de Ros Barony, special benefactors to the Knights Templar:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=inu.30000047617786&seq=358&q1=johannes

Also in “The Red Book of the Exchequer”, it is recorded that, in 1166, Johannes of Meaux held one eighth of a knights fee in Beverley, Yorkshire:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=inu.30000047617786&seq=577&q1=johannes

https://archive.org/details/redbookofexchequ9911grea/page/414/mode/2up?q=%22johannes+de+melsa%22

In 1191, Robert de Ros granted Ribston Manor near York to the Knights Templar:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015018393838&seq=83&q1=castle

There is a record in “The History of the Antient Abbeys, Monasteries, Hospitals, Cathedrals and Collegiate Churches, Vol. I” of a Robert Mason having land granted to him after the Conquest prior to 1119 in Sopwelle, St. Albans, London and in Syret, or Syerston, Nottingham:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433004872168&seq=296&q1=Mason

In Pipe Roll Volume 13, there is a record of a Master Robert the Mason in Dover near the Isle of Thanet in 1169-70:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=coo.31924091766851&seq=177

In “The Red Book of the Exchequer”, it is recorded that, from 1194 to 1197, Roberti De Dovra (Robert of Dover) held 14 knights fees, while the Abbey of St. Augustine held 15 knights fees:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=inu.30000047617786&seq=258&q1

Also see “The History of the Antient Abbeys, Monasteries, Hospitals, Cathedrals and Collegiate Churches, Vol. II”, in which a Hugh le Mason holds lands of the Canons of the Parish of Holy Trinity Aldgate prior to 1119:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433004872176&seq=1

Holy Trinity Aldgate, London is closely connected to holdings of land in Kent, and in particular to those of the Abbey of St. Augustine in Canterbury, where there is a record of three knights tenants of the Abbey holding land in Minster on the Isle of Thanet.

https://archive.org/details/historyofkent0000jess_t7h4/page/46/mode/2up?q=monkton

The Abbey of St. Augustine, Canterbury, Kent owned all of Minster and Monkton on the Isle of Thanet, as well as Kingston Manor nearby in Kent:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433004872168&seq=387&q1=Thanet

Interestingly, there is a record of the 1601 sale of Kingston Manor in Kent by William Mason of Gray’s Inn, son of the late Thomas Mason, yeoman, of nearby Monkton, Isle of Thanet, in the 1619 Kent Visitation:

https://collections.sal.org.uk/mss.0603

A pre-1637 manuscript by William Penson, Lancaster Herald, 1613-1637, was obtained containing a 23 generation long pedigree that purported to extend back from 1632 to before the Conquest in 1066.

Link to this pedigree in the Catalogue of the Harleian manuscripts in the British Museum:

https://archive.org/details/CatalogueOfTheHarleianManuscripts1/page/n593/mode/2up?q=%22Pedegrce+of+Malbn%22

Contact was made 16Feb2026 with Jeff Kattenhorn (mss@bl.libanswers.com), Manuscripts and Maps, Reference Service, The British Library, who offered to capture images of the manuscript with this ancient Mason pedigree (Harley MS 1092, folios 121b - 125).

Images (8) of the manuscript with the 23 generation Mason pedigree were obtained from Jeff Kattenhorn on 17Feb2026. The images of this pedigree can be viewed in the main Gallery section of the family tree entitled

“Masons Before And After Robert of Roxbury, MA” at Ancestry.com (Member Name - Harry Mason – joined 20Jan2023 – in Virginia).

Dr. Paul Fox, F.S.A. and the Institute for Heraldic Genealogical Studies were engaged to investigate the pedigree and the lineage of Harry Warren Mason (1932-2022), including the Penson pedigree, which was proven to be contrived and wholly unreliable (see report appended). Nonetheless, based on its premise, investigation has led to several records related to the history of stonemasons identified as “le Macun”, “le Mazun”, etc., who were active in Yorkshire and in various other counties in the period immediately following the Conquest.

This 23 generation pedigree claimed that a John Mason arrived with William the Conqueror and that he and his son Sir John Mason, knight, lived in Beverley, Yorkshire. After arrival, John Mason of Normandy was said to marry the daughter of Englishman Sir John Beverley of Beverley, Yorkshire. The pedigree claimed that the son and grandson of Sir John Mason of Beverley were both named Robert, which is a name that occurs frequently in records of very early land grants and holdings after the Conquest, as well as in records of the work of King’s Master Mason Robert of Beverley, also known as Robert of Patrington for his work at St. Patrick’s Church in nearby Patrington prior to his work at York Minster.

See the following concerning Robert of Patrington from “Handbook to Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire, presented to the members of the Museums association on the occasion of their annual congress, held at Hull, July 9th to July 13th”, 1923, ed. by T. Sheppard:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc2.ark:/13960/t73t9r12v&seq=273&q1=mason

Also see this video concerning Robert of Patrington and St. Patrick’s Church in Patrington:

https://youtu.be/Zb1Fh8q2XNM?is=8S6UmOavQ0sDoA0P

Again, the “Acts and Monuments of John Foxe”, v.2 records that a J. Monum accompanied the Conqueror at Hastings:

https://archive.org/details/actsmonumentsofj02foxe_0/page/137/mode/1up

It is possible that this J. Monum of Normandy who arrived with William the Conqueror was a stonemason active in building the fortifications established soon afterward.

“The Descriptive Catalogue of the Original Charters, Royal Grants, and Donations of the Battle Abbey” records that land was held by Robert Cementarius (Mason) in the area of Battle:

https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/viewer/472985/?offset=0#page=27&viewer=picture&o=search&n=0&q=cementarius

There is evidence of both the Beverley line and the Mason line in Beverley, Yorkshire, including a record of a Roger Mason in the office of Mayor in 1696:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015063613882&seq=124&q1=%22Beverley%22

A Roger Mason was also one of the original Capital Burgesses in the Charter of the Town of Beverley in 1685:

https://archive.org/details/beverlacorantiqu02poul/page/51/mode/1up?q=Mason

A volume of printed and manuscript collections chiefly relating to Beverley, Yorkshire in the British Library is Landsdowne MS 896, Part. VIII:

https://archive.org/details/CatalogueOfTheLansdowneManuscriptsI/page/n468/mode/1up?q=beverley

A link to Landsdowne MS 896 at the British Library:

https://searcharchives.bl.uk/catalog/040-002079043

Variants of arms found in Beverley, Yorkshire very closely match those of the Mason line in Wriothesley's Book of Chevrons in 1510, those of Thomas Mason of Monkton, Isle of Thanet, Kent in the 1619 Kent Visitation, as well as those of a Capt. Mason of Nottingham recorded in Prestwich’s Respublica as being in Cromwell's army at his installation in 1657.

In Prestwich’s Respublica (1657) are recorded a Capt. Mason and a John Mason, Esq., both of Nottingham. Also included are the arms of Capt. Mason, which are identical to those of Thomas Mason of Monkton in the 1619 Kent Visitation. Also listed is Benjamin Mason of Pixley, Hereford, the younger brother of Robert Mason of Roxbury.

Two Prestwich’s Respublica links:

https://archive.org/details/prestwichsrespu00presgoog/page/n298/mode/2up

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433081849915&seq=124&q1=%22Per+pale+argent+and+sable+a+chevron%22

Porny's Elements of Heraldry also record these Mason Nottingham arms:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=yale.39002014020680&seq=206&q1=Mason

The 1619 Kent Visitation:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.31175013653368&seq=207&q1=%22Per+pale+argent+and+sable+a+chevron%22

The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales:

https://archive.org/details/generalarmory0000unse/page/79/mode/1up?q=beverley

The visitation of Yorkshire, made in the years 1584/5:

https://archive.org/details/McGillLibrary-hssl_visitation-yorkshire_CS437Y4A2-19990/page/444/mode/1up

One of the variants of the Beverley, Yorkshire arms found in "The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales":

Argent a chevron sable between three pales

https://archive.org/details/generalarmory0000unse/page/79/mode/1up?q=Beverley

In heraldry, a "pale" is a vertical strip extending from top to bottom of the shield. It is false heraldry to emblazon, or describe, pales as being between a chevron (inverted V), indicating that there are three – two above the chevron on either side and one below the chevron in the center. Pales normally extend the height of the shield.

This anomaly may mean that the "pales" in these Beverley arms are actually billets, which symbolize bricks or written pages, as pales and billets are the same width and are both rectangular, with longer sides oriented vertically. These arms then would be very similar to those of Thomas Mason of Monkton in the 1619 Kent Visitation and to the Mason arms in Wriothesley's Book of Chevrons circa 1510.

Another possibility is that the Beverley arms in “The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales” were erroneously blazoned “pales”, when the charges were actually “piles”. According to some sources, in heraldry, a pile is a geometric ordinary shaped like a downward-pointing wedge or triangle symbolizing military strength, steadfastness, and readiness, often metaphorically linked to a spearhead or a foundational stake used in heavy construction.

Another consideration is that various dictionaries and catalogues of arms list arms as being from a location when there was no record of a surname. In this case, the surname Beverley in the 23 generation Mason pedigrees matches the town name of Beverley in Yorkshire. Perhaps the arms are of a family or families residing in Beverley, Yorkshire with a surname other than Beverley, or perhaps without a surname. If so, the arms may be variants of those associated with the Mason surname.

The family crests of the Beverley arms variants are also very similar to that of Thomas Mason of Monkton. They also include animals with gold horns and coronets, and with additional golden elements, such as golden hooves. See the entries for Beverley in the following sources:

The visitation of Yorkshire, made in the years 1584/5:

https://archive.org/details/McGillLibrary-hssl_visitation-yorkshire_CS437Y4A2-19990/page/444/mode/1up

An Alphabetical Dictionary of Coats of Arms Belonging to Families in Great Britain and Ireland:

https://archive.org/details/analphabeticald01wgoog/page/n8/mode/2up?q=pale

Also of interest in the research of the early Mason surname is that considerable documentation exists for a King's Master Mason Robert of Beverley, who worked at Beverley Minster (cathedral) in Beverley, Yorkshire, at Westminster Cathedral in London, at the Tower of London, and at Windsor Castle between 1263 and 1288. He was also responsible for the design of St. Patrick’s Church near Beverley in Patrington, the precursor to Beverley Minster. There is considerable information concerning King’s Master Mason Robert of Beverley in “Westminster Abbey & the King's Craftsmen”:

https://archive.org/details/westminsterabbey00leth/page/166/mode/1up?q=beverley
Also see “The Mediaeval Mason”:

https://historyofeconomicthought.mcmaster.ca/knoop/MediaevalMason.pdf

“Early Yorkshire Charters - Trussebut, Ros” by C. T. Clay, #102, records that circa 1190-1200 one of eighteen carucates of land held in Yorkshire at Kirkby Grindalythe at the time of the 1086 Survey was gifted by Robert de Ros, special benefactor to the Knights Templar, to Robert le Mason, to hold for life:

https://archive.org/details/YASES8/page/156/mode/2up?q=mason

Kirkby Grindalythe in Domesday:

https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/id/eprint/1568/1/Early_church_in_the_East_Riding.pdf

Also in “Early Yorkshire Charters” is found a record, circa 1175-1190, of a gift of land in Scarborough, Yorkshire where there existed a stone house built by Johannes de Beverlaco (John of Beverley):

https://archive.org/details/earlyyorkshirech01farruoft/page/289/mode/1up?q=%22Johannes+de+beverlaco%22

In Pipe Roll Volumes 40, 41, and 43, John of Beverley and Robert De Ros are listed together in four separate records paying fines for lands in Yorkshire from 1191-1194:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=osu.32435054852454&seq=99&q1=beuerl

In "English Mediaeval (sp) Architects", it is recorded that John Mason I, circa 1180, was a Knight Templar and probable designer of the circular nave of the Temple Church in London:

https://archive.org/details/englishmediaeval0000harv/page/162/mode/1up
This Sir John Mason (Frater Johannes Cementarius) is recorded as a witness to an 1185 charter at Westminster Abbey in “Records of the Templars in England in the Twelfth Century”. See p.70 at this link:

https://archive.org/details/recordsoftemplar0009unse/page/170/mode/1up?q=cementario

Also in “Records of the Templars in England in the Twelfth Century”, circa 1185, it is recorded that John of Beverley held two carucates of land near Beverley in Sancton, Yorkshire:

https://archive.org/details/recordsoftemplar0009unse/page/126/mode/1up?q=Beverley

William Cementarius is also recorded in this source holding half a rood of land in the village in 1185:

https://archive.org/details/recordsoftemplar0009unse/page/67/mode/1up?q=cementarius
Listed just below the record Sir John Mason I, Knight Templar, in "English Mediaeval (sp) Architects" is the record John the Mason IA, circa 1200, in which Alan Mader and his wife Alice were granted the land and houses that had belonged to Sir John the Mason at Bury St. Edmunds, possibly John the master mason of Bury Abbey. This is the same town where Thomas Mason of Monkton's son William Mason, Esq. of Gray's Inn, his son and heir Sir William Mason, and his son Robert Mason of Roxbury, MA all later resided just before Robert Mason of Roxbury emigrated to America.

This grant is documented in "The Kalendar of Abbot Samson of Bury St. Edmunds and Related Documents", by R.H.C Davis M.A (1954):

https://archive.org/details/kalendarofabbots0000rhcd/page/81/mode/1up

Also see:

https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.185188/page/n138/mode/1up

In "The Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond: a Picture of Monastic Life in the Days of Abbot Samson" is found a William of Bardwell/Berdewell holding several knights fees in Bury St. Edmunds in the year 1200, including two at Barningham, two at Bardwell/Berdewell, two at Hunston, and two at Stanton:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044081135535&seq=241&q1=Barningham

https://archive.org/details/ChronicleOfJocelinOfBrakelond/page/n223/mode/2up?q=cement

According to "The Victoria History of the County of Suffolk" (W. Page), Robert de Ros held land at Hawsted, Bury St. Edmunds, letting out to William de Cramaville and to Robert de Saxham at Bury St. Edmunds in 1289:

https://archive.org/details/victoriahisto01page/page/645/mode/1up?q=%22de+ros%22

According to “Suffolk in the XVIIth Century: the Breviary of Suffolk, by Robert Reyce, 1618”, the arms of Lord de Roos were in one of the windows of Lavenham Church, Sudbury at the time of publication:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hnzqrn&seq=172&q1=%22per+pale%22

William Mason of Gray’s Inn willed land in Barningham to his son and heir Sir William Mason, which he and his mother, the widow Anne, later sold in 1628 in accordance with his will:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101079831846&seq=306&q1=Mason

“The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe” also records events soon after the Norman invasion, including the necessity of securing the north of England against invasion by the Danes, as well as against rebellion by the newly conquered English. See the following excerpt at this link:

https://archive.org/details/actsmonumentsofj02foxe_0/page/107/mode/1up?q=beverly

“Over and besides this, the aforesaid William, as he was a warrior, so he delighting in forts and bulwarks, builded four strong castles, two at York, one at Nottingham, and another at Lincoln, which garrisons he furnished with Normans. (1069).

About the third year of his reign, Harold and Canute, sons of Swanus, king of Denmark, entered into the north country. The Normans within York, fearing that the Englishmen would aid the Danes, fired the suburbs of the town; whereof the flame was so big, and the wind so strong, that it reached the city, and burnt a great part thereof, with the minster of St. Peter, where no doubt many worthy works and monuments of books were consumed, in the time whereof the Danes, by favour of some of the citizens, entered the city, and slew more than three thousand of the Normans. But not long after King William chased them out, and drove them to their ships, and took such displeasure with the inhabitants of that country, that he destroyed the land from York to Durham, so that nine years after the province lay waste and unmanured, except only St. John's land of Beverly; and the people thereof were so strictly kept in penury by the war of the king, that, as our English story saith, they eat rats, cats, and dogs, and other vermin.”

The necessity of securing the north of England could explain the presence of John Mason of Normandy at Beverley, Yorkshire, possibly deployed there to build the fortifications needed to establish Norman control. York, Nottingham, and Lincolnshire are also areas where significant numbers of the surname Mason are first recorded. It may also be one reason that Beverley was spared by William the Conqueror after the rebellion, being a seat of Norman control in Yorkshire. It is also recorded that William venerated the Abbey of St. John of Beverley.

In a charter circa 1136-1140 contained in “Early Yorkshire Charters: Being a Collection of Documents Anterior to the Thirteenth Century” (#135), it is stated that the land of Beverley, Yorkshire “shall be as quit of army service and work upon castles as they were in the time of his ancestors, kings of England, as the writ of Henry I testifies”. This indicates that Beverley was indeed a center of castle construction.

Link to “Early Yorkshire Charters”:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=yale.39002006181102&seq=167&q1=johannis

Pipe Roll records of land holdings also support the possibility that this early Beverley Mason line is the same as either that of King’s Master Mason Robert le Mason of Beverley or of the Mason line with land grants and holdings shortly after the Conquest in 1066, or perhaps both.

In Pipe Roll Volume 10, “Ancient Charters, Royal and Private, Prior to A. D. 1200” is an “Agreement Between Ramsey Abbey and the Priory of Holy Trinity, London”, circa 1125-1130, which contains the name Johannes Macun:

https://archive.org/details/ancientchartersr10grea/page/26/mode/1up?q=macun

The Macun spelling of the Mason surname is found in many other Pipe Roll records of this period. It is possible that this Johannes Macun is related to the J. Monum who accompanied William the Conqueror.

The identical “Agreement Between Ramsey Abbey and the Priory of Holy Trinity, London” is also found in the Ramsey Chronicle, although apparently erroneously dated ten years earlier as 1115-1120:

https://archive.org/details/chroniconabbati00abbegoog/page/246/mode/1up?q=cementarius

Also of interest is that Holy Trinity London is closely connected to holdings of land in Kent, in particular to those of the Abbey of St. Augustine in Canterbury, where there is a record of three knights tenants of the Abbey holding land in Minster on the Isle of Thanet.

https://archive.org/details/historyofkent0000jess_t7h4/page/46/mode/2up?q=monkton

Again, the Abbey of St. Augustine, Canterbury, Kent owned all of Minster and Monkton on the Isle of Thanet, as well as Kingston Manor nearby in Kent, the latter being sold, at least in part, by William Mason of Gray's Inn, son of Thomas Mason of Monkton, in 1601:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433004872168&seq=387&q1=Thanet

Sale of Kingston Manor by William Mason of Gray's Inn:

https://collections.sal.org.uk/mss.0603

Pipe Roll Volume 24 contains a record circa 1198-1199 that includes family members Henry, Raph, Robert, and Roger Macun:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044074342650&seq=253&q1=macun

Substitutes for the surname Mason – "Macun" and "Cementarius" – are also found between 1198 and 1212 in the Curia Regis Rolls.

Ralph, son of Richard le Macun in Dorset in 1198, also Hugh, Richard, Robert, and William Macun in 1200 in Curia Regis Rolls Volume 1:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015010565995&seq=272&q1=Mason

Robert Cementarius, Roger Cementarius in Westminster in 1201 in Curia Regis Rolls Volume 2:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=ien.35556003598505&seq=9

Hugh le Macun in Lincolnshire in 1212 in Curia Regis Rolls Volume 6:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015066344774&seq=330

According to "The History and Antiquities of the Church and Parish of St. Laurence, Thanet, in the County of Kent" (Charles Cotton) these arms were found on a corbel in the early Norman parish church of St. Laurence:

Argent a chevron sable

Corbel(s) displaying arms argent a chevron sable:

Possible clerk of works - human face:
https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.fl1j9a&seq=39&q1=chevron

Arms - argent a chevron sable:
https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.fl1j9a&seq=79&q1=chevron

Research focus has been on the Isle of Thanet due to the 1619 Kent Visitation placing Thomas Mason of Monkton there, and also because various sources suggest that the surname Mason had been connected with a grant or knight's fee(s) in Thanet at the time of the Conquest.

In "England's Topographer, or A New and Complete History of the County of Kent" (W. H. Ireland), there is reference to an ancient family of the Manor of St. Laurence, and to a Robert of St. Laurence who "held the Manor of St. Laurence by King's service of the abbot of St. Augustine, as of his manor of Minster" in the reign of Edward I:

https://archive.org/details/bib_fict_1036454_1/page/538/mode/2up

The name Robert is repeatedly found in land records of the period and is tied to the title or surname Mason. Research focus has been on land grants and holdings in Yorkshire and Kent connected to the de Ros Barony, for example the grant of a carucate of land to Robert le Mason in Beverley, Yorkshire by Robert de Ros, and a record of John of Beverley holding two carucates of land in Sancton, Yorkshire.

There are also multiple records during this period of both Master Robert the Mason in Dover and Johannes of Dover holding knight's fees, as well as references to the de Ros Barony in Dover. Because the family of the Manor of St. Laurence is not otherwise named, it may be that they are not of the better known de Ros Barony, but could have been recipients of lands granted by them.

Perhaps a connection exists between Johannes Mason, Knight Templar or Robert le Mason, King's Master and these unknown arms found in the early Norman church at St. Laurence.

It is possible that the Mason line of Thomas Mason of Monkton originated in Normandy, arrived in England at the Conquest, were indeed granted land in various counties, as was the custom of the Victor.

Research focus has been on two possible origins for Thomas Mason of Monkton, Thanet, Kent:

1. It is likely, given the elements of the 1510 Mason arms (bricks, embattlement), that this Mason line were originally stone masons and soldiers. There are many records of master masons named Robert of Beverley/Patrington, Hugh le/the Mason, Ralph/Radulphus le/the Mason, Robert le/the Mason, Thomas le/the Mason, and William le/the Mason from the time of William the Conqueror to the year 1550 in the publication "English Mediaeval (sp) Architects":

https://archive.org/details/englishmediaeval0000harv/page/334/mode/2up?q=%22william+the+mason%22

There are records of a Hugh le Mason in the above "English Mediaeval (sp) Architects" who was active in Winchester in 1079-1083 and 1086. There are later Hugh le Mason's in Lincolnshire in 1190 and in Hereford in 1291. There are also Ralph le Mason's (1150-1300) and Radulphus le Mason's (1170-1182).

There is a record of the baptism of a Thomas Masson, son of Raph Masson in 1552 at Great Waldingfield, Sudbury, Suffolk, where William Mason of Gray’s Inn and Custos Brevium to the King’s Bench, later relocated. His son Thomas may indeed be Thomas Mason of Monkton, who would have been 20 years old in 1572 when Thomas Mason of Monkton was married in Eastry, Kent and had his first son William, father of Robert Mason of Roxbury and his 11 brothers:

https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:N5YY-XXK?lang=en

There was also a Raph Mason in Patrington who died 7 April 1573, just after the birth of William Mason, son of Thomas Mason of Monkton, in 1572 in Eastry, Kent:

https://archive.org/details/registersofpatri06patr/page/100/mode/2up?q=Mason

There was another Thomas Mason, son of Thomas baptized in Halifax, Yorkshire 15 March 1551:

https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/9841/records/4690957?tid=&pid=&queryId=11f79d8f-6cdb-4b6b-b15d-d6efec0d7bdb&_phsrc=eSh13&_phstart=successSource

There was also a Thomas, son of John Mason baptized 17Mar1553 at Colechester St. Nicolas in Essex. Essex is also listed as a Mason family seat in some copies of the 1619 Kent Visitation, although as part of the phrase "Bury St. Edmunds, Essex", possibly due to error or because of earlier county boundaries:

https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBPRS%2FESSEX-BAP%2F0387477&tab=this

"The General and Concise History and Description of the Town and Port of Kingston-upon-Hull" by James Joseph Sheahan records that the Masons of Hull, Yorkshire were a "long and honourably connected" family in the area of Hull:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc2.ark:/13960/t2r49m70j&seq=237

Also see the representation of the Mason surname in "History, Topography, and Directory of East Yorkshire (with Hull) published in 1892:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.a0010007433

2. There is much history of a Norman knight and kinsman/cousin of William the Conqueror named Hugh de Fleury/Flory/Flori/Floriac who assisted him and who later left the knighthood to become an Abbot at the Abbey of St. Augustine in Canterbury, eastern Kent in 1099. See p. 317 of the following History of St. Augustine Abbey:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433004872168&seq=369&q1=Thanet

This Sir Hugh Fleury/Flory was a builder who is said to have himself built the Chapter House and other portions of St. Augustine Abbey beginning with the foundations and who was later buried under the south steps in 1124.

A Hugh le Mason held land of the Canons of the Holy Trinity, Algate, London in the time of Prior John, circa 1250. See the following:

“The History of the Antient Abbeys, Monasteries, Hospitals, Cathedrals and Collegiate Churches”:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433004872176&seq=119&q1=%22Hugh+le+mason%22

Masons named Hugh later emigrated to America, most notably Capt. Hugh Mason, whose ancestors were recorded as being from Norfolk/Suffolk.

The arms of St. Augustine Abbey are sable, a plain cross argent, the tinctures of the Mason arms.

A search of the Fleury family (not the town of Fleury in Normandy) found the following arms:

Argent an eagle sable

After joining the Abbey, it is doubtful that this Hugh Fleury/Flory, if a stone mason, would have left St. Augustine Abbey to travel to work sites.

Although Hugh Fleury/Flory, an Abbot of St. Augustine Abbey, would normally not have had children, it is recorded that he was already well along in years and had participated in many military campaigns as a knight before joining the monastery. It is possible that he could have had children who are some of the Masons recorded during his lifetime and later.

A source was discovered which indicates Hugh/Hugo Fleury, Abbot of St. Augustine Abbey, had no wife or children. See p. 62 of the following reference:

https://archive.org/details/chronicleofsaint0000ahda/page/n251/mode/2up?q=fleury

This record may or may not be correct. Regardless, it is possible that this Hugh Fleury could have had children. However he was said to have sold all his holdings in Normandy and donated everything to the Abbey and church in general, having no wife or heirs. It is possible that he was granted land by the Abbey which he could have passed along to any heirs. However, there is no record of the surname Mason being associated with him.

According to “A History Of Kent” (Frank W. Jessup, 1987) there is mention in the Domesday Book that three knights, tenants of St. Augustine Abbey, held land in Minster on the Isle of Thanet:

https://archive.org/details/historyofkent0000jess_t7h4/page/46/mode/2up?q=monkton

Domesday Book:

https://opendomesday.org/place/TR3164/minster/

Perhaps one of these knights was the Mason mentioned in the family history commissioned by Harry Warren Mason II (1932-2022) as having been granted land for service during the Norman conquest.

Consultation with Ms. Cressida Williams, Archivist, Canterbury Cathedral, an expert on seals (documents) mentioned in the histories of the Abbey of St. Augustine did not produce any evidence concerning the Abbot Sir Hugh Fleury and his arms, he having been a knight.

There is confusion between this St. Augustine Abbot Hugh de Fleury/Flory/Flori/Floriac of Normandy and another cousin of William the Conqueror Hugh d'Avranche in Normandy who also accompanied William the Conqueror during the 1066 invasion. This latter Hugh was also known as Hugh le Gros for his obesity and was said to be a fierce warrior. These two Hugh's have much different records and died at different times. Hugh Fleury/Flory/Flori/Floriac was the 43th Abbot of St. Augustine Abbey and died in 1124.

Thomas Mason of Monkton and his ancestors may not have originated in eastern Kent on the Isle of Thanet. Histories of Kent say that this Mason family was one of a dozen or so distinguished families "known to have at one time resided on the Isle of Thanet". See for example Hasted's Kent, Vol. X:

https://archive.org/details/b28772155_0010/page/233/mode/1up?q=mafon

https://archive.org/details/b28772155_0010/page/254/mode/1up?q=auguftine

Perhaps the Mason family only held land in Kent on Thanet rather than originating there. The House of Names Mason family history says only that a Mason was granted land on the Isle of Thanet. The histories of Kent do not contain many generations of the surname Mason. See, for example, the "Extracts from Kent Wills 1400 – 1560" at this link:

https://search.findmypast.co.uk/record?id=GBOR%2FANGULINE%2FARA427%2F0564&parentid=GBOR%2FANGULINE%2FARA427%2F0564

The Wills and Probate Index for Suffolk from 1300 – 1858, however, records many more of the surname Mason, most especially in the Bury St. Edmunds area:

https://search.findmypast.co.uk/record?id=or%2fbrs%2f274%2f0372

The unfortunate reality working against an easier identification of this Mason line, if they were a line of stone masons, is that stone masons traveled from job site to job site for long periods, which is how Masonic lodges began - to provide housing for travelling workers. But master masons often traveled even more frequently and extensively, visiting multiple sites to supervise the work. There were also master masons who became the King's Master Mason, such as Robert of Beverley/Patrington, especially when there was a need for building large fortifications or for the building and restoration of royal residences, government buildings, and churches. These masons were often knighted and granted Manors with large land holdings. So, on one hand these Masons are widely located in building records where they may or may not have originated. On the other hand, they were at times individually recognized, and perhaps knighted, in which case their arms may be discovered and might match those of this Mason line, as might be the case for the Masons of Beverly, Yorkshire.

The Mason ancestors of Harry Warren Mason II (1932-2022) could be a line of stone masons and soldiers who, at the Norman invasion of 1066 or later, were granted lands in various counties. Ancestors were lawyers, knights/cavalry officers, MP's (politicians), doctors, musicians, and clergy. Mason ancestors in America were also cavalry soldiers and musicians. As Mason ancestors of this line were also lawyers and politicians, the billets of the Mason arms of the 16th and 17th centuries may symbolize pages of legal writ instead of stone masonry.

Manuscripts not yet researched - British Library Archives and Manuscripts Catalog:

https://searcharchives.bl.uk/?page=2&q=Harley+MS+1482&search_field=all_fields

Note: EXACT search strings for online searches in the British Library Catalogue are of two formats (type without the quotation marks, substitute 0-9 for #): "Harley MS ####" and "Add MS #####"

Manuscripts possibly containing Mason pedigrees and/or arms:

Landsdowne MS 896, Part. VIII. A Volume of printed and manuscript Collections chiefly relating to Beverley, Yorkshire in the British Library:

https://searcharchives.bl.uk/catalog/040-002079043

Harley MS 1092, folios 121b - 125 (fabricated 23 generation Mason pedigree by William Penson, Lancaster Herald, 1613-1637, from the Conquest to 1632 - see above and below)
Harley MS 1106 folio 210 (Kent 1619 Visitation with coats of arms, some in color, with Mason of Frendbury)
Harley MS 1410, folios 59, 59b (John, son of William, of Yorkshire, grantee - coat confirmed and crest granted by Cooke)
Harley MS 1422, folio 15b (Waltham als Mason, Master Mason to Hen. VIII, by Cooke)
Harley MS 1432, folio 319b (Visitation of Kent 1634 - Mason of Frendbury)
Harley MS 1452 (Noble families in Kent)
Harley MS 1548 (John Philipot's Visitation of Kent from 1619-1621)
Harley MS 5526, page 437 (Kent 1619 Visitation – Mason of Frendbury)
Harley MS 6175 (Kent Pedigrees)
Add MS 5507, folio 306 (Kent 1663 Visitation with Pedigrees and Mason of Frendbury)
Add MS 14307, folio 28b (Mason family Of Thanet in Collection of Kentish Arms - not a Herald's Visitation)
Add MS 16279, folio 144 (Kent 1619 Visitation)
Add MS 26691 (HERALDIC work-book of John Mason circa 1700; consisting of drawings of arms for hatchments)

“A Manual for the Genealogist, Topographer, Antiquary, and Legal Professor” contains these manuscript references to the 1619 Kent Visitation:

Harley MS 1106, Harley MS 1432, folio 319b, Add MS 5507, p.306, Harley MS 5526, page 437, Add MS 16279, folio 144

Edition of 1856:

https://archive.org/details/amanualforgenea00simsgoog/page/167/mode/2up?q=Thanet

Edition of 1861:

https://archive.org/details/amanualforgenea01simsgoog/page/168/mode/2up?q=heraldic

“An Index to the Pedigrees and Arms Contained in the Heralds' Visitations: And Other Genealogical Manuscripts in the British Museum” (R. Sims, 1849):

https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=hT5FAAAAYAAJ&pg=GBS.PP4&hl=en

Entries for the surname Mason in the various counties:

Herefordshire – Mason -Harley MS 1140, folio 44; Harley MS 1159, folio 44; Harley MS 1442, folio 44

Kent - Mason of Frendbury - Harley MS 1106, folio 210; Harley MS 1432, folio 319b; Add MS 5507, p. 306 (billets); Harley MS 5526, p. 437

Kent – Mason of the Isle of Thanet - Add MS 14307, folio 28b; Add MS 16279, p. 144; Add MS 5507, p. 306 (billets)

Lancashire - Mason of Clitheroe – Harley MS 1549, folio 9b

London – Mason – Harley MS 1463, folio 83; Add MS 5533, p. 9

Norfolk – Mason - Harley MS 1476, folio 146b; Add MS 5533, p. 212

Shropshire - Mason of the Castle - Add MS 14314, folio 46b

Shropshire – Mason of Diddlebury – Harley MS 1241, folios 69b, 140b; Add MS 14314, folio 14b; Harley MS 1396, folio 231

Shropshire – Mason – Harley MS 6172, folio 14

Harley MS 1432, folio 163b – 12Nov1571 Confirmation of arms and crests, unto Thomas Gent Esq. by Robert Cooke Clarenceux - Thomas listed just after ESSEX and above a copy of the 1619 Kent Visitation - POSSIBLE link of Thomas Mason of Monkton, Isle Of Thanet to an Essex Thomas, POSSIBLY Mason (no last name given in index). One copy of the 1619 Kent Visitation, Add MS 5507 folio 306, has ESSEX recorded as a town for the family, although, in the 1619 Kent Visitation, Thomas Mason of Monkton, his two sons William (Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk) and James (Frindsbury/Frendbury, Kent), and William's 11 sons (Bury St. Edmunds) are NOT from Essex, suggesting an earlier possible line there:

https://archive.org/details/CatalogueOfTheHarleianManuscripts2/page/

n59/mode/2up

ESSEX Visitation Manuscripts:

Catalog of Essex Visitations:

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc2.ark:/13960/t00z72b5t&seq=35
Manuscripts in catalog:

Harley MS 1137, folio 11 (1558 continued to 1614)
Harley MS 1484, folio 52 (1558 continued to 1614)
Harley MS 6065 (1612)
Harley MS 1398, folio 4 (Pedigrees – 1612)
Harley MS 1083 (1634)
Harley MS 1542 (1634)
Harley MS 7017, article 40 (1634)
Harley MS 2198, folios 12-48-50 (Arms and descents – 1634)

Mason surname manuscript references listed at the end (last three pages) of a Mason family history entitled "A Record of The Descendants of Robert Mason of Roxbury":

https://archive.org/details/recordofdescenda1891maso/page/37/mode/1up

A House of Names Mason family history commissioned by Harry Warren Mason II (1932-2022) claims that land on the Isle of Thanet, Kent was granted to a Mason by William the Conqueror for service during the Norman invasion of 1066.

“A History of Kent” (Frank W. Jessup, 1987) mentions an entry in the Domesday Book concerning three knights, tenants of St. Augustine Abbey, held land in Minster on the Isle of Thanet:

https://archive.org/details/historyofkent0000jess_t7h4/page/46/mode/2up?q=monkton

Domesday Book:

https://opendomesday.org/place/TR3164/minster/

Perhaps one of these knights was the Mason mentioned in the family history commissioned by Harry Warren Mason II (1932-2022) as having been granted land for service after the conquest.

Link to catalog entry for manuscript (debunked) containing a Mason pedigree beginning at the Norman Conquest and ending with Thomas Mason, Mayor of Southampton in 1632:

Harley MS 1092, ff. 121b – 125:

https://archive.org/details/CatalogueOfTheHarleianManuscripts1/page/n593/mode/2up

References to Thomas Mason, Mayor of Southampton, and to the Penson Mason pedigree:

https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/62282/images/62282_b1100753-00098?ssrc=&queryId=4d6e2509-f164-4b17-906e-8d2129cda13d&usePUB=true&pId=4391097996

British Library Catalogue links to two manuscripts listed above:

Harley MS 6175 - Kent Arms & Pedigrees (latest date 1619):

https://archive.org/details/CatalogueOfTheHarleianManuscripts3/page/n347/mode/1up?q=6175

Harley MS 1548 - John Philipot's Visitation of Kent from 1619-1621:

https://archive.org/details/CatalogueOfTheHarleianManuscripts2/page/n131/mode/2up?q=Mason

Pedigree of the Masons of Eden Place, Kirkby Stephen, co. Westmorland in "A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain":

Arms: Per pale argent and sable a chevron between three mason's squares all counterchanged
Crest: A curlew standing in heather ppr.
Motto: Cui Fides Fide

https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/viewer/604680/?offset=1&return=1#page=1217&viewer=picture&o=search&n=0&q=%22mason's%20squares%22

Pedigrees of the county families of Yorkshire, Vol. 3 - East Riding (unrelated Mason pedigree):

https://archive.org/details/pedigreesofcount03fost_0/page/n159/mode/2up?q=Mason

Mason Pedigrees in a London Visitation - Harleian Society Publications Newer Vol. 17, Pages 85 To 87 (Mason pedigrees of unrelated Mason lines):

https://archive.org/details/publicationshar08socigoog/page/n99/mode/1up

Mason pedigrees in “A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain & Ireland, vol. 2” (Mason Pedigrees of unrelated Mason lines):

https://archive.org/details/genealogical02burk1879/page/1074/mode/2up?q=mason

Mason pedigrees in “The Genealogist's Guide to Printed Pedigrees”:

https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=cg8IAAAAQAAJ&pg=GBS.PA420&hl=en

Archaeologia Cantiana by Kent Archaeological Society:

https://archive.org/search?query=Archaeologia+Cantiana

The Ancestry of Thomas Mason of Monkton, Kent (d. 1576)

Dr Paul A. Fox, F.S.A.

In view of the loss of the early parish registers of Monkton it is fortunate that Thomas Mason (d. 1576) married his wife Thomasine Davill in the nearby parish of Eastry, on 10thJanuary 1572, and that their eldest son William was baptised in that same parish seven months later. Other than these facts most of what is known about Thomas derives from his will, a document which speaks of his prosperity as a yeoman farmer, since he was able to leave £100 to each of his two infant sons with which they were to receive an education. The making of such a provision was enormously to his credit, and set in motion a chain of events which was to take his grandson to the American colonies. According to the Kent visitations of 1619 Thomasine came from Chalfont St Giles in Buckinghamshire, demonstrating that Thomas had an unusual degree of connectivity with the wider world for a man of supposedly modest status.[1]

His son William Mason (1572-1628) matriculated at St John's College, Cambridge in 1588 and began his legal training at Gray's Inn in London on 30th May 1595.[2] Having completed his education it was time for marriage. He and his brother James married the sisters Anne and Grisill who were the daughters of Robert Cannon of Swaffham Market in Norfolk. Robert Canham married Rose Webb at Ixworth in 1582[3] and baptised their daughter Anne at Swaffham (where Robert Canham had been baptised on 20 June 1563 as son of John) on 4 August 1583, and their daughter Grace was baptised there on 22October 1587. In selecting their brides from Norfolk it is likely that the family was coming home. There are no indications of a presence of the Mason family on the Isle of Thanet prior to Thomas's arrival there. Norfolk, on the other hand, was a huge nexus of the family, and a great many children surnamed Mason were baptised in the county throughout the sixteenth century.

William married Anne Cannon at Ixworth, near Bury St Edmunds, on 6th August 1601, and it was close to here, at Barningham, that he purchased a second country home by1618, having previously resided at Great Mongeham in east Kent. The couple's first three sons (of eleven) were all baptised at Ixworth, William in 1602, Henry in 1603 and Robert in 1604.

Having stepped forward in time, we can now step backwards. The vast resource that is the records of the Courts of King's Bench and Common Pleas has been utilised in order to look for family connections, both within Norfolk, and in the counties where William Penson, Lancaster Herald (d. 1637), placed an interconnected web of gentry families

1 The Visitation of Kent 1619-1621, Harleian Soc, vol. 42 (1898), p.191
2 John and J.A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses* (Cambridge, 1924), pt 1, vol 3; *Gray's Inn Admission Register*
1521-1887, p. 88.
3 Boyd's marriage index, available at findmypast.com.

surnamed Mason. From these court records two individuals called Thomas Mason were found to have been connected with Swaffham Market in the early sixteenth century.

Firstly, Thomas Mason (d. 1525), merchant of Bishop's Lynn (which became King's Lynn in 1537). This Thomas was returned as being worth over £40 in 1523, meaning that he was wealthy.[4] There were two lawsuits in connection with his will which were brought by his executors, Robert Boson of Swaffham Market, chaplain, and William Hanley of Bishop's Lynn, merchant.[5] From the actual will of 18 August 1524, which was proved on16 November 1525, he held property both in Lynn and in Swaffham Market. His wife Kateryn survived him, as did their only child, a daughter called Margaret, who was still under twenty years of age and unmarried. He was to be buried by the altar of St Thomasin St Margaret's church, Lynn. Thomas Mason's friend John Serjeant went on to make a bequest of two silver censers, two ships (presumably of silver) and a holy water stoop to be used at his own obits and those of Thomas Mason of Lynn and Caterine his wife in Swaffham church.[6] Thomas became a freeman of Lynn in 1499-1500, and since he had not been born in the port, he presumably originally came from Swaffham.[7] He was not, however, the first of his name to be connected with Lynn. John Mason was a 'keelman'(one who works on a boat or barge) there in 1427, and another will be mentioned below.[8]

So a dead end, but interesting nonetheless. Rather more promising is the Thomas Mason of Swaffham Market, yeoman whose wife was Margaret Isaak. They sued John Hall, yeoman of Swaffham Market for trespass in 1537, and they were alleged to owe Edmund Denny, clerk, some money in 1538.[9] The gentry family of Isaak had ancient and ongoing connections with Kent both on Thanet and in nearby parishes[10], so this couple represent very plausible parents for Thomas Mason of Monkton in Thanet, but the sad absence of a will makes it impossible to be certain.

Another probable relation was Barbara Mason (d. 1538), the last abbess of the Cistercian abbey of Marham before the Reformation, a monastery located close to Lynn, midway between this town and Swaffham. She was elected abbess in 1512, and after the monastery was dissolved in 1537 she retired to Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk.[11] The principal beneficiary of her will was her brother Robert Mason, to whom amongst other

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4 Walter Rye, *Norfolk Families*, vol 1, p. 538.
5 The National Archive, Kew, London (TNA) CP40/1046 f. 671 in Hilary 1525, and CP40/1049 in 1526.
6 Blomfield, *Norfolk,* vol. 6, p. 221.
7 Calendar *of the Freemen of Lynn 1292-1836 (Norwich, 1913),* p. 73.
8 CP 40/664 f.545.
9 CP40/1092 : 1536, 2550; CP40/1096: 2292.
10 Edward Isaake, esq (c. 1510-1573) sold 120 acres in St John's Thanet in 1542-3 (Kent feet of fines TNA

CP 25(2) 22/142, no. 1969). His mother's name was Margery, and he might well have had a sister of that
name, although if so, she is missing from published pedigrees. See pedigree in Walter Goodwin Davis, The
Ancestry of Mary Isaac c. 1549-1613 (Portland ME, 1955), p. 3.
11 David M. Smith, *The heads of religious houses in England and Wales III 1377-1540* (Cambridge, 2008),
p. 669.

bequests she left her feather bed.[12] Also mentioned in the will were her sisters Isabel and Elyn, and Edmund Mason.

Baptised in the same church of St Margaret's Lynn (there were two medieval churches in the port) where the merchant Thomas Mason (d. 1525) had worshipped, and almost certainly a near kinsman, was a man of enormous consequence in the early history of the colonisation of North America.[13] John Mason, son of John Mason, merchant of Lynn, was raised to the baptismal font there on 11th December 1586. His father died in1592 leaving his two young children (and a third in the womb) each £100 in his will.[14] His son John was sent to Magdalen College, Oxford age fifteen in 1602, but soon flitted to Peterhouse in Cambridge. His career was meteoric. From 1616 to 1622 he was governor of Newfoundland; then in 1622 he had a grant of the province of Maine jointly with Sir Fernando Gorges. In 1626 he served as commissary general for the Duke of Buckingham's ill-fated military expedition to France, becoming treasurer and paymaster of the army in1627. This position also came with the captaincy of Southsea castle in Portsmouth, and the command of the Channel fleet. Returning to New England in 1631, the following year he became vice president of the English council for New England. Next, in 1635 he received a royal patent granting him the new province of New Hampshire. He died the same year and was buried in Westminster Abbey. The arms that he bore are known from a seal impression of 1634 in the Massachusetts archives: On a chevron engrailed three cross patty.[15] That these differed from the contemporary arms of Mason of Suffolk does not preclude him from having been a kinsman, as the two families must have been granted arms at around the same time (in William's case by 1619, the year of the Kent Visitation. In the period of their respective grants the heralds would not have been able to prove any connection, and so different arms were indicated.

While it is impossible to say from whence the members of the Mason family linked to Swaffham and Lynn originally came, there is a parish not far removed from both in which the surname had become established by 1373: Hindringham. In this year John Mason purchased a house and 26 acres of land.[16] Between 1408 and 1549, members of the family residing in this place appear repeatedly in the Court of Common Pleas in connection with minor local disputes. John Mason and his wife Alice in 1408[17], another

12 Samuel Tymms (ed.) *Wills and inventories from the registers of the Commissary of Bury St Edmunds*,
Camden Soc, vol. 49 (1850), pp. 133-5.
13 Charles E. Clark 'John Mason (1586-1635), *New Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Amazingly he
has no entry in the American National Biography.
14 TNA PROB 11/79/198. His wife's name was Isabel, and there was a daughter Dorothy. Also mentioned
was the testator's brother Henry Mason who had a son John.
15 Charles Knowles Bolton, *Bolton's American Armory (1927)*, p. 109.

16 Walter Rye, *A short calendar of the Feet of Fines for Norfolk 1307-1486 (Norwich, 1886),* p. 363, 47 Edward III, no. 1513.
17 CP 40/589 d1625.

John in 1475-8[18] and 1486[19], Simon Mason between 1498 and 1513[20], William Mason between 1529 and 1549 (in 1533 he was acting as executor of John Mason[21]), and Alexander Mason between 1529 and1536.[22] These men were farmers on a modest scale.

It is time now to consider whether the pedigree of Mason in the Harleian manuscripts at the British Library, drawn up by the herald William Penson between 1632and 1637, and in which the East Anglian Masons do not appear, can assist in finding the ancestors of the New England Masons.[23] The focus of this pedigree is the Hampshire family, and in particular Thomas Mason (1574- 1653) who was mayor of Southampton in1631 and 1643. As the alderman of Holyrood Ward in Southampton he signed the 1641-1642 Protestation Returns whereby adult males swore to uphold the ProtestantReformation.[24] The pedigree gives his parents as Thomas Mason of Kingsclere, Hants and a daughter of Mr. Strong of Clatford. It seems rather odd if (as must surely have been the case) Thomas Mason was Penson's client, that he was unable to remember his own mother's name! Stanger still, the baptism survives from Kingsclere where Thomas was baptised on 15 Feb 1573/4 as the son of Steven (not Thomas) Mason. We also have in the original registers the baptisms of three of the other brothers attested in the pedigree: John, Richard and Robert. Steven's wife was Elen Fickis, whom he married at Kingsclere on 2 May 1568. Thus the pedigree begins to cause serious concern in the very part which ought to be the most accurate. The answer to the conundrum must surely be that the mayor was complicit in the deception, the purpose of the pedigree being to aggrandize his ancestry.

To this end an important focus of the pedigree is the personage of Sir John Mason(c. 1503-1566), a man who served four successive Tudor monarchs from Henry VIII to Elizabeth I, and whose inclusion not only adds lustre, but introduces a coat of arms. He was born to parents of modest means in Abingdon, Berks. According to the Alumni Oxonienses his father (whose name is not known) was a farmer and his mother the sister of a monk at Abingdon.[25] It is generally supposed that his uncle Thomas Rowlands was the last Abbot of Abingdon, an office which he held from 1512. Rowlands was able to provide John with an excellent education, culminating with a degree at Oxford University, where he was elected a fellow of All Souls College in 1521. Mason became close firstly to Sir Thomas More and then to Thomas Cromwell, through whom he was introduced to the

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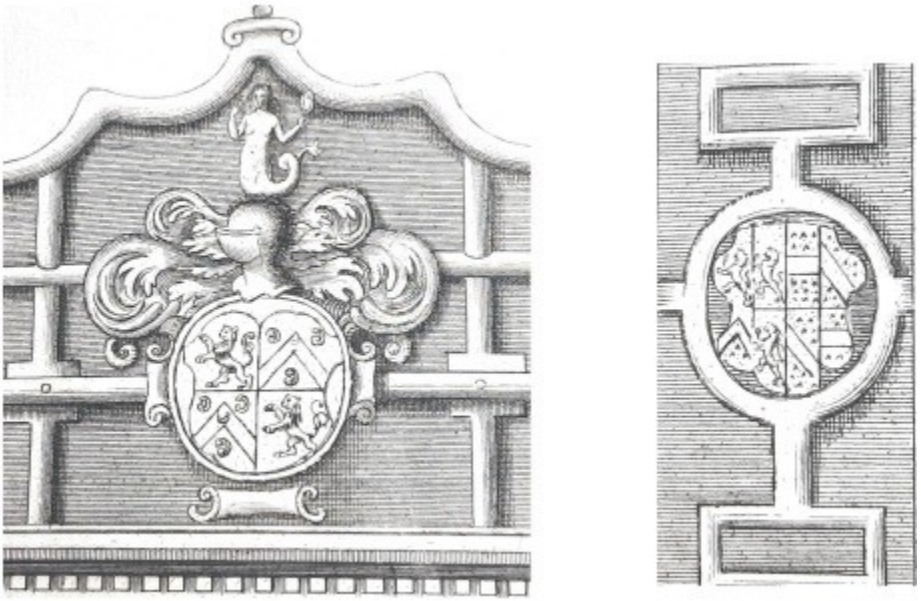
18 TNA C1/67/208.
19 CP 40/895 f39.
20 TNA KB 27/978, KB 27/1006, CP 40/943 d 1208 and d1254.
21 CP 40/1076.
22 CP 40/1060 7115d, CP 40/1076, CP40/1088.
23 British Library (BL) Harleian Ms. 1092, ff. 121v – 125.
24 He made his will on 12 Feb 1652/3 making a legacy to the poor of Holyrood, his executor being his brother Robert Mason. Also mentioned was his cousin Thomas Mason of London, very likely Thomas

Mason, gent of Staple’s Inn who in 1627 attested for the marriage licence of his sister Elizabeth that she
was 21 years of age. The will was proved 13 Aug 1653, see Commonwealth Probate Index 1652-3 on findmypast.com.
25 P.R.N. Carter, ‘Sir John Mason (c. 1503-1566), New *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

The lost tomb of Sir John Mason (d. 1566) in Old St. Paul’s Cathedral, London

Privy Council. In 1540 he married into an old Kentish gentry family, his wife being Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Isley, esquire, of Kent. His father-in-law held land in Wrotham in Kent, to which he added by purchase in 1512-13, which explains why Mason purchased 500 acres of Wrotham Wood in 1551-2.[26] Elizabeth brought him the manor of Hartley Wintney in Hampshire. As his stock continued to rise, he was knighted by Edward VI following his coronation in 1547. He achieved his highest position at court under MaryI, who made him Treasurer of the Chamber, and he was, uniquely, kept on in the household of Elizabeth I.

In his will he made generous provision for his in-laws, the Wykes family of Drayton, his principal heir being his nephew Anthony Wykes, who took the name of Mason. The overseers of his will were Sir William Cecil, Queen Elizabeth's principal secretary, and Sir William Cordell, the Master of the Rolls.



Detail of the arms of Sir John Mason on his tomb

In the Penson pedigree it is stated that Sir John Mason's heir was his cousin Robert Mason of Petersfield in Hampshire, whom the pedigree makes the mayor's second cousin. This is a complete falsehood, the purpose of which can only have been to place the knight in the orbit of the Mason family of Southampton, to which he was not related. Penson knew that this branch possessed arms, and so the purpose of the concocted pedigree becomes clearer: Penson was being paid well, and he wanted to persuade his senior

26 TNA Kent Feet of Fines, 4 Henry VIII no. 117 and 5 Edward VI no. 40.

colleagues the kings of arms to allow the mayor to use a version of Sir John Mason's arms. Whether or not he achieved this before his death is uncertain.

It is fortunate that we have a drawing of Sir John's tomb in Old St Paul's cathedral as was recorded by Sir William Dugdale before it was destroyed in the Great Fire of London.[27]There also survives an impression of his seal, on which there are the same four quarterings as used on his tomb in impaling the arms of his wife.[28] In the arms above the tomb, topped with the crest of a mermaid holding comb and mirror, is a version of his arms which utilises one (rather than two) of her ancestral coats.

His personal arms, as present in the first and fourth quarters of both versions, were a lion rampant. In the second quarter of the more complex arms is another lion rampant, perhaps the arms of Rowlands.[29] In the third quarter, and quartering Mason's arms above the tomb, is another shield inherited from his mother, on a chevron between three torques (?) a crescent for difference.

Elias Ashmole recorded Anthony Mason's arms from his tomb in St Lawrence's church, Reading. As Sir John Mason's heir he adopted a different version of Sir John's arms: Or a double-headed lion rampant azure, and this revised version of the Mason arms was later placed on a memorial to Sir John in St Helen's church, Abingdon.[30] The switch to the two-headed lion was a piece of heraldic antiquarianism. Creswick's Roll of c. 1510 ascribed these arms to T. Mason, whose identity has yet to be determined, while Portington's Roll, believed to date from the reign of Henry VI (1423-1461), but only known from Tudor copies, ascribed the arms simply to Masson.[31] College of Arms manuscriptL9, part of an alphabetical index of arms complied c. 1510 for Garter Thomas Wriothesley, ascribes to 'Sir' John Masone the very similar arms Argent a double-headed lion rampant azure.

The Penson pedigree makes Sir John's father a serjeant at law called Robert Mason, but the names of these serjeants are now well known, and there was no such individual. Since the pedigree is so patently fabricated, its only remaining usefulness is a means of seeking out notable individuals surnamed Mason from previous centuries. Of particular note in the pedigree is "Sir William Mason of Beverley in Yorkshire", supposedly a Knight of the Bath at the coronation of Henry VII, whom research has shown to be fictional. The closest we come to him is the John Mason who on 30 September 1485 "for services at the king's victorious field" [at the battle of Bosworth, at which King Richard III was defeated] was given for life the office of the keeping of the wharves on the river Thames at Walton and Weybridge in Surrey.[32] This office was in the hands of another

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27 Sir William Dugdale, *The History of St Paul's Cathedral in London, 2nd ed by Henry Ellis (London, 1818),*
p. 65.

28 TNA E 211/33. The seal is appended to a document of 1556.
29 As attested from the seal of John Rowland, priest, in 1405, Thomas Woodcock et al , *Dictionary of British*
Arms, Medieval Ordinary (DBA), vol. 1, p. 120.
30 Adrian Ailes, *Church Notes of Berkshire 1665-6*, Harleian Society new series vol. 23 (2024), pp. 79, 195.
31 DBA vol. 1, p. 197.
32 *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1485-1494*, p. 6; Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, vol 7, 1247.

before the end of the reign, and nothing more of this John Mason or his antecedents can be determined. This individual must be considered as a strong candidate to have been the original bearer of the arms [Or/argent] a double-headed lion rampant azure, having been a military man (although not a knight) who would have needed such for identification on the field of battle.

Further back the compiler of the pedigree has rather audaciously inserted a Robert Mason, bishop of Lincoln: there was no such person. Additionally there was a supposed constable of Bolingbroke castle in Lincolnshire, and a supposed Abbot of Llantarnam, neither of whom can be historically verified from published lists.

A particularly striking aspect of the Penson pedigree is the way that seventeen generations of a Mason family from Beverley are used to link everything together. This ought to translate into dozens of appearances in the royal courts. We have seen that for Hindringham in Norfolk over a period of a hundred and fifty years there are around sixteen suits in the courts, but only a single instance can be found of a Mason residing in Beverley over a purported period of six centuries: Henry Mason, mercer in 1377, whose name does not appear on Penson's pedigree.[33] Similarly, no involvement of the family can be found at Bleasby in Lincolnshire, where a branch of the family supposedly resided for more than six generations. The conclusion must be that the Penson pedigree is almost entirely a work of fiction.

Turning now to the origins of the surname. It is important to understand the social history of the English surname. Surnames were introduced by the Norman invaders, but they did not begin to spread into the majority of English speakers until around the year1300. Mason is an English word, and it does occur as a descriptor both in Latin and in Norman-French documents from an early post-Conquest period. It was common to use occupations to distinguish between two men with the same name from the same place. Before circa 1300 these descriptors were not inherited. John le mason (or sometimes simply John Mason), having a son Peter who was a blacksmith, would be known as Johnle Smith. Might then a Norman family have taken the surname Mason? This is quite impossible, because for the Anglo-Normans to use a surname in the English language would have been anathema.

There has existed a very slight confusion in that earlier historians have conflated the Norman surname Massey with Mason. Specifically Hugo Maci, who in 1086 held Bickton in Hampshire from Hugh d'Avranches, Earl of Chester, has been called Hugo Mason, but this individual belonged to the family of Massey (also Maci and Masci) which took its name from Macey in Normandy. Such errors have been corrected in the two modern standard reference works on the Norman families by Katherine Keats-Rohan:

33 CP40/466 d.888. In 1567 a William Mason purchased some land in Beverley, likely beginning a presence
which was still apparent in Penson's day, see *Feet of Fines for the Tudor period, part 1*, Yorkshire Record
Society (1887), p. 330.

Domesday People, and Domesday Descendants.[34] There is no Cementarius (mason) in the Domesday Book, and only a single instance noted in the following century, in the form of Conan Cementarius whom we find in London in 1129; but the surname was not handeddown.[35]

The rise of the hereditary surname Mason from its origin circa 1300 into the higher echelons of society can be charted in various ways, one of which is to look at feudal land tenure which carried military obligations to the crown. In 1284-5 Hugh le Mazun held the village of Faintree in Shropshire in right of his wife who was the coheir of Adam deFaintree.[36] In 1302-3 Robert le Mason held two bovates of land in Bradley in the West Riding of Yorkshire from the lord of Skipton castle.[37] These two men were likely part of the first generation to have the hereditary surname. In 1316 the William Mason who held the village of Hornblotton in Somerset is likely to have belonged to the second generation.[38]

Another useful tool to study the rise of the surname is to look at the Parliamentary Writs of summons for military service, which only concerned the wealthy. From the reign of Edward I (1272-1307) there are no Masons, but from Edward II's reign (1307-1327) we find various 'le Masons' in the returns, individuals who were probably not occupationally masons, such William le Mason or Macoun of Penrith in Cumberland who in 1318 was accused of having been an adherent of the rebellious Thomas, Earl of Lancaster.[39]

From the mid-fourteenth to the mid-fifteenth centuries the muster lists of those who were fighting for the crown overseas contain many men surnamed Mason.[40] The great majority of these were serving as archers, and likely they came from every part of England, although the returns do not provide the county of origin. These longbowmen gave English armies a huge military advantage in the period. A smaller group were the men at arms below the rank of knight who we might call esquires. To maintain the necessary horse and equipment: armour and weapons, required significant income.

Some of the more interesting examples of the esquires include: Edward de Mason was in the retinue of the Black Prince in Gascony in 1368-9[41]; Richard le Mason was a man at arms in the king's bodyguard of Richard II in 1398, as was John le Mason, anarcher[42]; William Mason was at the battle of Agincourt in 1415[43]; John and Thomas Mason saw naval service under Hugh Courtenay, earl of Devon, in 1418[44]; Laurence Mason

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34 Katherine Keats-Rohan, Domesday People (Woodbridge, 1999); *Domesday Descendants* (Woodbridge,
2002).
35 *Domesday Descendants*, p. 215.
36 *Inquisitions and Assessments relating to Feudal Aids 1284-1431*, 6 vols (London 1899-1920), vol. 4, p.
217.
37 Feudal Aids, vol. 6, p.109.
38 Feudal Aids, vol. 4, p. 318.

39 F. Palgrave, Parliamentary Writs.
40 Medievalsoldier.org/database
41 TNA E101/29/24 m1d.
42 TNA E101/42/10 m2 and 5.
43 BL Harley Ms. 782 f. 80.
44 TNA E101/49/34 m. 7 and 11.

served under Henry de Lisle at the siege of Orleans in 1429 [45]; Thomas Mason served Richard, Duke of York (d. 1460) in the garrison of Rouen palace in 1440[46]; and finally, John Mason served under the same duke in his 1441 expedition to France.[47]

Thus far, extensive searching has failed to detect any knight from a Mason family prior to Sir John Mason in 1547, which is frustrating since the rolls of arms suggest (unless the attribution was a later interpretation) that there was an earlier Sir John Mason who was knighted prior to around 1510. A small caveat here is that priests were not infrequently given the honorary salutation of Sir in the medieval era, so perhaps a reference to arms which had been used by a priest was accidentally interpreted as having been a knight. Knighthood was relatively rare, and would not have been bestowed without service to the crown. Such a man would certainly appear in the records of the royal court, even if the knighthood occurred at the end of a career, whereby none of the entries list him as being a knight.

One such individual was John Mason of Wokingham in Berkshire who was appointed as a tax collector in that county in 1453.[48] He might conceivably be the same individual who served Richard, duke of York in 1441, and would work well as a potential ancestor of Sir John Mason of Abingdon. In 1455 John Mason, yeoman of Wokingham, was accused of cattle rustling with other Wokingham farmers by Richard Beauchamp, bishop of Salisbury. [49] If the accusation was true then it was not unusual in the medieval era even for royal officials to go on the rampage. Important to note that by definition a yeoman, who was a farmer of substantial acres, but with insufficient income to maintain the dignity of a gentleman, would not have been permitted to bear a coat of arms.

An official of the royal court who would similarly not have qualified for knighthood, but who is still of interest, is Alexander Mason, who in 1471 received a grant for life of the office of king’s minstrel, with an annual salary of ten marks from the issues ofCumberland.[50] Six years later his salary was upgraded for life when he was granted the reversion of the office of marshal of the king’s minstrels.[51]

To conclude, we must consider those all important other arms of Mason which were recorded circa 1510 both in Wriothesley’s book of chevrons and in Wriothesley’s surname index of arms: Per pale argent and sable a chevron between three billetscounterchanged.[52] The fact that the roll of chevrons has ended up in the archives at Norwich is a matter of chance, and the document has nothing specifically to do with the county. Yet the heralds might well have had reason to suppose that William Mason (1572-1628) of Suffolk had some connection with them. The evidence was insufficient for a

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45 BL Add. Ch. 11617.
46 *Bibliotheque Nationale de France* Ms. Fr. 25775 no. 1480.

47 TNA E101/53/33 m.7.
48 *Calendar of Fine Rolls* 1452-1461, p. 49.
49 CP 40/776 f.495.
50 *Calendar of Patent Rolls* 1467-1477, p. 260.
51 *Calendar of Patent Rolls* 1476-1485, p. 22.
52 Dictionary of British Arms, medieval ordinary, vol. 2, p. 298.

grant of the arms without modification, so the chevron was made plain. The original embattled chevron was a visual reference to the surname, since an important job of a mason was to build battlements, while the billets probably stand for blocks of stone. The crest of out of a ducal coronet a buck's head is visible on a paper seal impression below William Mason's signature on a 1621 document relating to his business as a justice of the peace in Suffolk.[53] The impression of the shield is poor, and cannot be made out.

Left, arms of Mason as recorded c. 1510 by Sir Thomas Wriothesely, Garter King of Arms, in his Book of Chevrons; right, arms granted to William Mason by 1619.

A final person of interest from the royal records is Richard Mason, who was awarded the plum position of the office of tronage and passage of wools, "with the usual wage" at Lynn in 1451.[54] In a similar role he became searcher of ships in Lynn in 1453, confirmed again in 1456.[55] Such a royal official, having contact with the court, is exactly the sort of individual to have been granted arms by the heralds of his day.

53 BL Harleian Charter 58 F. 39.
54 *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1446-1452*, p. 428.
55 *Calendar of Fine Rolls 1452-1461*, p. 15; *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1452-1461*, p. 329.